

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6400

As of February 4, 2014

Title: An act relating to insurance for enlisted members of the Washington national guard.

Brief Description: Concerning insurance for enlisted members of the Washington national guard.

Sponsors: Senators Hobbs, O'Ban, Tom and Conway.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health Care: 2/03/14.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Staff: Mich'l Needham (786-7442)

Background: The Washington National Guard members and their families are eligible to participate in the military health program, known as TRICARE. The TRICARE program combines health care resources at military hospitals and clinics with civilian health care networks. The program offers certain premium-based health and dental plans for purchase by National Guard and Reserve members who are not on active duty and not otherwise eligible for federal health benefits.

The TRICARE medical premiums are currently \$51.68 per month for an individual, and the dental premiums are \$10.96 per month for an individual.

Summary of Bill: Members of the National Guard within the ranks of private to sergeant, who enlist after August 1, 2014, for a period of three years, are eligible for payment of premium-based health and dental plans that are provided for active duty service members, National Guard members, and other eligible persons. The state must select the premium-based plans that apply, and the compensation must be paid for the period of the enlistment.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill will make health and dental plans more affordable to the younger, enlisted soldiers and airmen. Often these guard members drill part time with very low incomes, and they do not have insurance through their primary employers. Helping them access affordable medical and dental care will help ensure readiness for first responders. We are open to an amendment that may help lower the fiscal impact by focusing access to the TRICARE Select Reserve plan.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Josh Halpin, National Guard Assn. of WA.